



The Messenger

Sunday, February 18, 2024
Κυριακή, 18 Φεβρουάριος

Sunday of the Canaanite
Κυριακή τῆς Χαναanaίας

Weekly Worship Guide

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation • Atlanta, GA
Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, Agapetus the Confessor, Bishop of Sinai
Flavian the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople

Today's Memorials

Service can be found on p. 127
of the Divine Liturgy Book

6 Month Memorial for Eleni Poulos

1 Year Memorial Maria Thomas

5 Year Memorial for Harriet (Hariklia) Vasilakis

Congratulations to the 2024 Endowment Board

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Oath of Office Today

Sunday of the Canaanite



In Matthew 15:21–28, Jesus encounters a Canaanite (Syrophoenician) woman who begs Him to cure her daughter. Jesus initially refuses her request by saying, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs” (Matthew 15:26). Taken out of context, and especially in English, it’s easy to mistake this for an insult. In the flow of the story, however, it’s clear Jesus is creating a metaphor meant to explain the priorities of His ministry. He is also teaching an important lesson to His disciples.

Jews in Jesus’ day sometimes referred to Gentiles as “dogs.” In Greek, this word is “kuon,” meaning “wild cur” (Matthew 7:6; Luke 16:21; Philippians 3:2). Non-Jews were considered so unspiritual that even being in their presence could make a person ceremonially unclean (John 18:28). Much of Jesus’ ministry, however, involved turning expectations and prejudices on their heads (Matthew 11:19; John 4:9–10).

According to Matthew’s narrative, Jesus left Israel and went into Tyre and Sidon, which was Gentile territory (Matthew 15:21). When the Canaanite woman approached and repeatedly asked for healing, the disciples were annoyed and asked Jesus to send her away (Matthew 15:23).

At this point, Jesus explained His current ministry in a way that both the woman and the watching disciples could understand. At that time, His duty was to the people of Israel, not to the Gentiles (Matthew 15:24). Recklessly taking His attention from Israel, in violation of His mission, would be like a father taking food from his children in order to throw it to their pets (Matthews 15:26).

The exact word Jesus used here, in Greek, was “kunarion,” meaning “small dog” or “pet dog.” This is a completely different word from the term “kuon,” used to refer to unspiritual people or to an “unclean” animal.

Jesus frequently tested people to prove their intentions, often through response questions or challenges (see John 4:16–18; and 4:50–53). His response to the Canaanite woman is similar. In testing her, Jesus declined her request and explained that she had no legitimate expectation of His help.

The woman, however, lived out the principle Jesus Himself taught in the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1–8). Her response proved that she understood fully what Jesus was saying, yet had enough conviction to ask anyway (Matthew 15:27). Jesus acknowledged her faith—calling it “great”—and granted her request (Matthew 15:28).

So, according to both the context and language involved, Jesus wasn’t referring to the Canaanite woman as a “dog,” either directly or indirectly. He wasn’t using an epithet or racial slur but making a point about the priorities He’d been given by God. He was also testing the faith of the woman and teaching an important lesson to His disciples.

Source: *Metropolis of Zambia*

Order of Hymns Following The Small Entrance

Αναστάσιμον Απολυτίκιον. Ἦχος δ'.

Τὸ φαιδρὸν τῆς ἀναστάσεως κήρυγμα, ἐκ τοῦ Ἀγγέλου μαθοῦσαι αἱ τοῦ Κυρίου Μαθήτριάι, καὶ τὴν προγονικὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀπορρίψασαι, τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις καυχώμεναι ἔλεγον· Ἐσκύλευται ὁ θάνατος, ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ὁ Θεός, δωρούμενος τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Απολυτίκιον τοῦ Ἁγίου. Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

Ὁρθοδοξίας ὁδηγέ, εὐσεβείας Διδάσκαλε καὶ σεμνότητος, τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὁ φωστήρ, Ἀρχιερέων θεόπνευστον ἐγκαλλώπισμα, Λέον σοφέ, ταῖς διδαχαῖς σου πάντας ἐφώτισας, λύρα τοῦ Πνεύματος. Πρέσβευε Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, σωθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

Απολυτίκιον τοῦ Ναοῦ. Ἦχος δ'.

Σήμερον τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν τὸ Κεφάλαιον, καὶ τοῦ ἀπ' αἰῶνος Μυστηρίου ἡ φανέρωσις, ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, Υἱὸς τῆς Παρθένου γίνεται, καὶ Γαβριὴλ τὴν χάριν εὐαγγελίζεται. Διὸ καὶ ἡμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ τῇ Θεοτόκῳ βοήσωμεν· Χαῖρε Κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ.

Κοντάκιον τῶν Κεκοιμημένων. Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

Μνήσθητι, Κύριε, ὡς ἀγαθὸς τῶν δούλων σου καὶ ὅσα ἐν βίῳ ἡμαρτον συγχώρησον· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀναμάρτητος, εἰ μὴ σὺ ὁ δυνάμενος καὶ τοῖς μεταστάσι δοῦναι τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν.

Κοντάκιον. Ἦχος β'.

Προστασία τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀκαταίσχυντε, μεσιτεία, πρὸς τὸν Ποιητὴν ἀμετάθετε, μὴ παρίδης, ἀμαρτωλῶν δεήσεων φωνάς, ἀλλὰ πρόφθασον, ὡς ἀγαθὴ, εἰς τὴν βοήθειαν ἡμῶν, τῶν πιστῶς κραυγαζόντων σοι· Τάχυνον εἰς πρεσβείαν, καὶ σπεῦσον εἰς ἱκεσίαν, ἡ προστατεύουσα ἀεὶ, Θεοτόκε, τῶν τιμώντων σε.

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Mode 4.

The joyful news of your resurrection was proclaimed by the angel to the women disciples. Having thrown off the curse that fell on Adam, they ran elatedly to tell the apostles: Death has been vanquished; Christ our God is risen from the dead, blessing all the world with his great mercy.

Apolytikion of the Saint. Mode pl. 4.

Guide of Orthodoxy and a sacred teacher of piety and dignity, luminary of the world, and God-inspired jewel of monastics, O wise Leo, the Spirit's instrument: by your teachings you enlightened all. Intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

Apolytikion of the Church. Mode 4.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from eternity. The Son of God becomes the Virgin's Son, and Gabriel announces the grace of this Good News. Let us also join with him, calling to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Woman full of grace; the Lord is with you.

Kontakion for the Departed. Mode pl. 4.

Remember, O Lord, as You are good, Your servants, and forgive every sin they have committed in this life. For no one is sinless except You, Who have power to grant rest to those who have fallen asleep.

Kontakion. Mode 2.

A protection of Christians unshamable, intercessor to our Holy Maker, unwavering, please reject not the prayerful cries of those who are in sin. Instead, come to us, for you are good; your loving help bring unto us, who are crying in faith to you: Hasten to intercede and speed now to supplicate, as a protection for all time, Theotokos, for those who honor you.

Epistle (St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-18;7:1)

Reader: Susanna Zaharatos

PROKEIMENON: O Lord, how manifold are your works. You have made all things in wisdom

VERSE: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

Gospel (Matthew 15:21-28)

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

DIVINE LITURGY CONTINUES ON PAGE 51 OF THE DIVINE LITURGY BOOK

Reminders for Receiving Holy Communion

Holy Communion is offered in the Orthodox Church only to those individuals baptized and/or chrismated (confirmed) in the Orthodox Faith. To participate in Holy Communion one must be in good standing with the Church spiritually (for example, married people must have had their marriage blessed in the Church; and, all must be without grave sin on their hearts). For all Orthodox Christians, the proper preparation for Holy Communion must be observed: that is, examination of conscience, confession, reading the prayers for Holy Communion, and the proper fasting. If you have any further questions about this, please speak with the clergy. Women should remove all lipstick when approaching for Holy Communion.

Thank you.

Support our Cathedral

Welcome, everyone!

We extend a warm welcome to our visitors worshipping with us today in our Cathedral. You are invited to join us for our fellowship, following the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in Carlos Hall next to the Church. Thank you for your visit! Please stop by our hospitality table and sign the register in the Narthex.

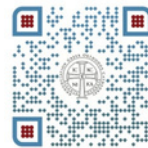
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